

Kendrick Park Committee

History & Aesthetics Subcommittee Report

General Recommendations

- ♦ **New Design** - Design and program use of Kendrick Park should honor, but not be limited to, the traditions of other existing public spaces in Amherst or the period and 'park' concepts with which George and Jenny Kendrick would have been familiar. Amherst has numerous traditional downtown green spaces—Town Common, Sweetser Park, West Cemetery, and the grounds for public buildings. Kendrick Park should be a beautiful landscape that is coherent as a public park, but its design and use should provide the community with something new and different for Amherst, something forward-looking and active that will durably serve the needs of the entire community and be an attractive destination for visitors. This should include multi-purpose urbanized spaces, and quiet ornamental green space, and such structures as may be necessary or desirable to accommodate town center uses and activities. Kendrick Park should be more than a quiet, contemplative neighborhood retreat.
- ♦ **UMass/Downtown Connection** - The location and history of Kendrick Park make it an entry and a path of connection between UMass and downtown Amherst. The design and programming of the park should take this into account.
- ♦ **History** - The long history of the Kendrick Park area, its development and use, should be recognized in the design of the park's landscapes, spaces and structures, and in a series of historic interpretive displays. This should include investigating the surfacing and reuse of building foundation stones and other materials as park features—seating, walls, enclosures, surfaces, markers, etc.
- ♦ **Archeology** - The archeological and interpretive value of buried materials, including building foundations, middens, cisterns, etc., should be fully investigated during the process of planning for alterations in the park's landscape.
- ♦ **International Design** – The architectural and landscape design influences of Japan or other nations might also be considered for the design of spaces, structures (entry arches?), the use of water features, and the landscaping of paths and plantings. In addition to Amherst's historical and cultural connections to Japan, much of the cultural future of United States will involve connections to the larger world.
- ♦ **Accessibility & Sustainability** - All man made features of the park design should, to the greatest extent feasible, be both handicapped accessible and 'green' (environmentally sustainable) in design.

Specific Recommendations

- ♦ **Environmental Quality & Tan Brook** - Part of the park's history and aesthetic quality is its environmental quality. In discussing whether or not to 'daylight' Tan Brook, or to otherwise use its water for the creation of water features, the history ("Wolfpit Brook", the tanneries, etc.), extent and roles of the brook's watershed could be highlighted in public displays and park information. Park design that involves the brook could be used as part of a larger effort to clean up the Tan Brook watershed and increase public awareness of this important downtown water resource. Given the current efforts to clean up the Campus Pond (downstream on Tan Brook), this would provide an opportunity for cooperative efforts with UMass. Planning for any ice rink, water park, etc. should employ appropriate practical new technologies ensuring the utility of those facilities over time.
- ♦ **Performance Space** - In the design and programming of multi-purpose spaces and structures (large and small) within the park, ample accommodation should be made for public performances—music, readings, drama, puppetry, etc.
- ♦ **Public Art/Sculpture** - The use of sculpture and/or sculptural elements should be considered in the design of all structures and spaces within the park, and as an element in historical interpretation.

Entry gates/arches, wayfinding markers, interpretive displays, and seating are a few examples. Locations might be considered and developed for ongoing temporary sculpture installations.

- ♦ **A Signature Arts Event** - Among the options for a “signature event” for the park should be an extended (week-long, 3-4 day weekend) arts festival, including a sculpture garden and other outdoor displays, performances, etc.
- ♦ **Plantings:**

World Influence – In addition to preserving and honoring existing historic private and public plantings, the selection of new plant materials—trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs, etc.—for the park’s landscape design should emphasize native species or cultivars, and traditional park plantings, and might include a significant representation of Japanese and Asian species, in keeping with Amherst’s long association with Japan and the presence of Japanese and Asian trees and other plants as a part of the Amherst landscape for more than a century. This would be an opportunity to make connections between Kendrick Park, the heritage of William Smith Clark (buried in nearby West Cemetery), UMass (Clark was largely responsible for the Massachusetts Agricultural College being located in Amherst, and was one of its first Presidents), and to Amherst’s sister city of Kanagesaki, Japan.

The “Plow” – There is a growing understanding of the role of farming and other local resource-based activity in community life. The design and use of Kendrick Park should in some tangible way reflect this fundamental aspect of Amherst’s history and future. Traditional farming, forestry and other local land resource-based activity could be celebrated within the framework of an urban park design—an arboretum of park tree species including the use of native food trees (chestnuts, oaks, hickories, butternut, chestnut, apples, etc.) and the use of local crop species, herbs, and native food plants as decorative and intensive small-scale demonstration elements could provide a symbolic representation of this important local tradition. A Farmer’s Market space/structure (whether seasonal or permanent) would provide a direct, ongoing role for local food traditions in the park’s function.
- ♦ **Lighting & Acoustics** - Park lighting design should serve not only as a security feature, but as an aesthetic complement to spaces, structures, plantings and night-time activity in the park. The siting and design of lighting and acoustics within the park should maximize the effectiveness of uses and activities within the park, including performance spaces. The park’s lighting and acoustics should be welcoming and inclusive with respect to adjacent downtown business areas, but should minimizing impacts beyond the park’s boundaries in the direction of adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- ♦ **Nodes** – At pathway ‘crossroads’ and other important focal or activity points throughout the park, a distinct and identifying combination of place-making/way finding elements should be created, including but limited to: informational or directional kiosks/signs, sculptural elements, historical interpretive materials, paving, lighting, and gardens.